

REMARKS

1. Claims 17, 19-20 Allowed

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Examiner has allowed independent claims 17, 19, and 20, and has found claims 4, 9, and 11 to contain allowable subject matter.

2. Objection to the Specification

Applicants note that box 9 “The specification is objected to by the Examiner” was checked off in the Office Action. The Examiner requested Applicants’ cooperation in correcting any errors in the specification. The application has been reviewed and Applicants are currently not aware of any errors in the specification, other than those previously identified in the Preliminary Amendment dated August 8, 2001. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

3. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner maintained the rejection of amended independent claims 1 and 14 as anticipated by the prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of Claims 1, 5, 8-11, and 14-16, including independent claim 1.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner noted that the “scope of the claims did not include all the limitations of the subject matter of claims 3-4. Applicant is reminded that the allowable subject matter is the combination of all the elements.” During a telephone interview on November 23, 2004, the Examiner clarified that independent claim 1 would be allowable without further examination if all of the limitations of claims 3 and 4 were written into claim 1.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include all of the limitations of claims 3 and 4. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

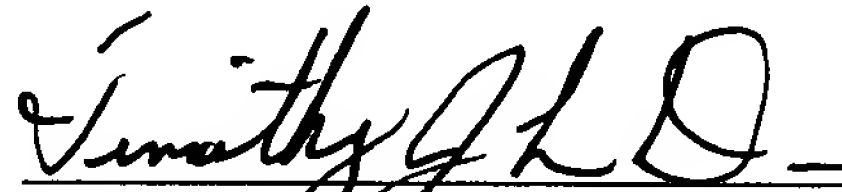
Claims 2-4 have been cancelled without prejudice. Additionally, previously independent claim 14 has been rewritten to depend upon claim 1. Therefore, dependent claims

5, 8-11, and 14-16 depend upon claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejections pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) have been overcome.

SUMMARY

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seek allowance thereof. If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application but believes that an interview would be helpful to resolve any issues, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at (312) 321-4277.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Timothy J. Le Duc", written over a horizontal line.

Timothy J. Le Duc

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